

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claims 10 and 18-24 are amended to clarify the subject matter recited therein and/or to correct typographic errors. No new matter is added by this amendment.

Claims 10 and 20 are objected to based on several informalities. Claims 10 and 20 are amended as suggested by the Examiner, and therefore it is respectfully requested that the objections to these claims be withdrawn.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claim 1-9. Applicant also notes with appreciation that the Examiner acknowledges that claims 10-17 and 20 are directed to allowable subject matter.

Applicant notes that claim 23 is rejected in the summary of the Office Action, but is not addressed with particularity in the Detailed Action portion of the Office Action. Applicant respectfully requests that claim 23 receive a detailed examination in the next communication to the Applicant.

Claims 18, 19, 21, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,412,692 to Miyagawa (hereinafter Miyagawa). Claim 18 has been amended to include the feature of allowable claim 20 that the program includes, *inter alia*, a procedure for, before performing voting processing upon reception of the vote request, determining whether or not a preset timeout time has elapsed from the acceptance time recorded on the ballot card to a time of voting. It is respectfully submitted that this feature is not disclosed or suggested by Miyagawa, and therefore amended claim 18 is allowable.

Claims 19, 21, and 24 depend from claim 18 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 18 is allowable.

Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyagawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,758,325 to Lohry et al. (hereinafter Lohry). Claim 22 depends from claim 18, and the addition of the Lohry reference fails to cure the critical deficiency discussed above with regard to Miyagawa as applied to claim 18. Therefore, claim 22 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 18 is allowable.

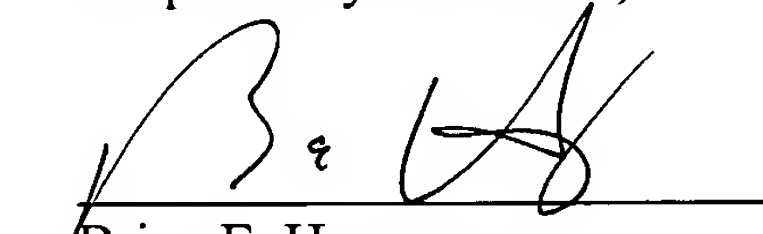
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Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that claims 1-24 are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper, not fully covered by an enclosed check, may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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